

**Remarks**

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the above amendments and in light of the following remarks and discussion, is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully request entry of this response, as the response places the application in clear condition for allowance, or alternatively places the claims in better form for appeal. Specifically, Applicants have amended independent claims to overcome outstanding rejections.

Claims 7-15, 22-27, 34-40, and 53-55 are currently pending in the application; Claims 7, 10, 13, 22, 25, 34, 36, 38, and 53 are amended by way of the present response. Applicants respectfully assert that support for the changes to the claims is self-evident from the originally filed disclosure, including the original claims, and that therefore no new matter has been added.

Claims 7, 9, 22, 24, 25, 27, 34-40, 53, and 55 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,400,463 to Kitamura et al. (Kitamura); Claims 8, 23, and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kitamura in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,081,342 to Nakai et al. (Nakai); Claims 10, 12, 13, and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kitamura in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,797,706 to Sugishima et al. (Sugishima); and Claims 11 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kitamura in view of Sugishima, and further in view of Nakai. For the following reasons Applicants respectfully assert that the amendments to the claims have overcome the rejections.

The present invention is directed to image formation systems (e.g., as recited in independent Claims 7, 13, 25, 38, and 53), as well as image formation apparatuses (e.g., independent Claims 10, 22, 34, and 36). Independent Claim 7 recites a slave machine configured to report functions available in the slave machine to master machine based on a

connection state of a finisher to the slave machine, and the master machine configured to inhibit operation in a link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected based on a lack of a connection of the finisher to the slave machine.

Independent Claim 10 recites an image forming apparatus configured to not display in a link copy mode a key to permit selection of an unusable function in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected when the image forming apparatus does not receive a signal indicating that a finisher is connected to another image forming apparatus.

Independent Claim 13 recites a slave machine configured to report functions available in the slave machine to a master machine based on a connection state of a finisher to the slave machine, and the master machine configured to not display in a link copy mode a key to permit selection of an unusable function in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected based on a lack of a connection of the finisher to the slave machine.

Independent Claim 22 recites an image forming apparatus configured to cancel in a link copy mode a mode to permit execution of an unusable function in the image formation apparatus or another image formation apparatus when the mode is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected in the image formation apparatus or the other image formation apparatus when the image forming apparatus does not receive a signal indicating that a finisher is connected to the other image forming apparatus.

Independent Claim 25 recites a slave machine configured to report functions available in the slave machine to a master machine based on a connection state of a finisher to the slave machine, and the master machine configured to cancel a mode to permit execution of an unusable function in the master machine or the slave machine when the mode is selected in a link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected in the master machine or the slave machine based on a lack of a connection of the finisher and the slave machine.

Independent Claim 34 recites an image forming apparatus configured to inhibit operation in a link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected and another image formation apparatus is not in a state where data communications can be executed when the image forming apparatus does not receive a signal that a finisher is connected to the other image forming apparatus.

Independent Claim 36 recites an image forming apparatus configured to inhibit operation in a link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected when the image forming apparatus does not receive a signal that a finisher is connected to another image forming apparatus.

Independent Claim 38 recites a slave machine configured to report to a master machine whether data communications can be executed from the slave machine to the master machine based on a connection state of a finisher to the slave machine, and the master machine configured to inhibit an operation in a link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected and the slave machine is not in data communications executable state based on a lack of a connection of the finisher to the slave machine.

Independent Claim 53 recites a slave machine configured to report to a master machine whether data communications can be executed from the slave machine to the master machine based on a connection state of a finisher to the slave machine, and the master machine configured to inhibit operation in the link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in a link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected and when the slave machine is not in a state where data communication can be executed based on a lack of a connection of the finisher to the slave machine.

Regarding the rejection of independent Claim 7, Kitamura is directed to an image processing system. As shown in Figure 1, for example, of Kitamura, stations (digital copying

machines) 1001 to 1004 are connected with each other with communication cables 1005 to 1007.<sup>1</sup>

Applicants respectfully assert that Kitamura does not teach or suggest, however, the claimed features of a slave machine configured to report functions available in the slave machine to master machine based on a connection state of a finisher to the slave machine, and the master machine configured to inhibit operation in a link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected based on a lack of a connection of the finisher to the slave machine, as recited in independent Claim 7. Specifically, Applicants respectfully assert that Kitamura does not show or state the stations 1002 to 1004 (which are asserted in the Office Action to be analogous to the claimed features of slave machines) configured to report functions available based on a connection state to a finisher, and does not show or state the station 1001 (which is asserted in the Office Action to be analogous to the claimed features of a master machine) inhibiting operation based on a lack of a connection of such a finisher to the stations 1002 to 1004, for example.

Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of independent Claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) be withdrawn, and the independent claim allowed.

For reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to independent Claim 7, Applicants respectfully assert that Kitamura does not teach or suggest the claimed features recited in independent Claims 10, 13, 22, 25, 34, 36, 38, and 53. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of independent Claims 22, 25, 34, 36, 38, and 53 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) be withdrawn, and the allowance of independent Claims 22, 25, 34, 36, 38, and 53.

Regarding the rejection of independent Claims 10 and 13, the Office Action relies on Sugishima in an attempt to remedy the deficiencies of Kitamura. Applicants respectfully

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<sup>1</sup> Column 3, lines 35-57.

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assert that Sugishima does not teach or suggest, however, the claimed features recited in the independent claims. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of independent Claims 10 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn, and the allowance of independent Claims 10 and 13.

Applicants respectfully assert that Claims 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 23, 24, 26, 27, 35, 37, 39, 40, 54, and 55 are allowable for the same reasons as the independent claims from which they depend, as well as for their own features. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of dependent Claims 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 23, 24, 26, 27, 35, 37, 39, 40, 54, and 55 under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(e) and 103(a) be withdrawn, and the allowance of dependent Claims 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 23, 24, 26, 27, 35, 37, 39, 40, 54, and 55.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 7-15, 22-27, 34-40, and 53-55 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

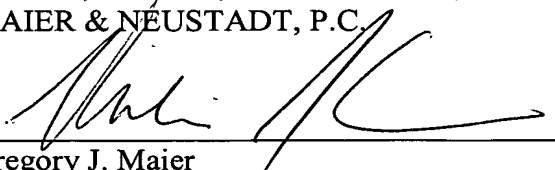
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Respectfully submitted,

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